

PITTSBURGH CPAC NEWSLETTER



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Mentoring

Joyce Voynick

Mentoring is a means of assisting employees to achieve career goals and meet future organizational needs. The Pittsburgh District Mentoring Program is open to all District employees. Mentors are supervisors/managers or journey level employees who serve as an advisor to less experienced employees. Conversely, associates are employees who would like to gain knowledge or advice from a more experienced employee to pass on their expertise and knowledge to others who is committed to advancement.

The role of the mentor is usually transitional, i.e., a mentor works with an associate up to the point where the associate no longer needs direct mentor support or guidance. A mentor is usually at least two grades above the associate. The mentor should also be outside the associate's chain of command. The role of the associate should not be passive. The associate should actively seek self-development and be willing to accept broader responsibilities. Periodically the mentor and the associate should evaluate their partnership.

Are the goals and objectives of the associate being met? Are both partners professionally satisfied with the progress? The Pittsburgh District has a Mentoring Web page <https://intranet.lrp.usace.army.mil/>, that is accessible from the Intranet page. The web page contains a link to a private industry web site updated monthly. In addition, the Pittsburgh web site contains a link to the District mentoring regulation and relevant mentoring forms. If you are interested in learning more about the program, or joining the program please give me a call or send me an email.



Automated Training Management Program

Joyce Voynick

In response to an initiative in the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division Campaign Plan the Pittsburgh District is working on developing a plan to implement an Automated Training Management Program (ATMP). The system is in response to the CELRD People Initiative: Training Management System where each District is instructed to use a system that identifies organizational and individual needs, prioritizes training needs, monitors execution and determines effectiveness. Currently the District is reviewing a system developed in St. Paul District and has been implemented throughout the Missouri River Division, and is currently being tested in South Atlantic Division. The ATMP we are testing is an Oracle based system that is linked to CEFMS to retrieve employee and labor cost information. Additionally, the ATMP is also based on Mission Essential Task Lists (METL) hierarchy, from the District level down to the employee level. Implementation of this program is targeted for fall 2001.



Application Procedures

Swan Wilkerson

Recently questions on applications procedures have been raised regarding the areas of consideration and the ways for current Corps employee to apply.

The area of consideration is what groups are eligible to apply for a particular position for example (Department of Defense employees, transfer eligible, etc.) In the Pittsburgh District for Merit Promotion Announcements, i.e., job numbers starting with GB, the

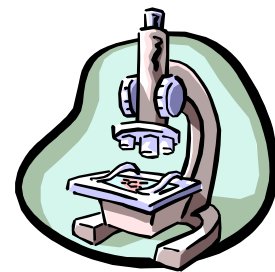
minimum area of consideration is any Department of Army employee. In addition, other applicant categories can be considered, i.e., veterans, reinstatement eligible.

The system called RESUMIX can be used for these announcements and resumes which are limited to only three pages.

When management decides to expand the area of consideration to external sources, i.e., Delegated Examining Unit (DEU), the Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC) has the authority to perform some of the functions previously performed by the Office of Personnel Management. Current Department of Defense employees in addition to any eligible candidate can apply through DEU announcements.

The benefit of applying through both the merit promotion announcement and the external announcement, would be if; 1) you were possibly eligible for a higher grade due to qualifications, but are bound by time-in-grade restrictions through the merit promotion announcement; 2) you have some type of veterans preference and depending on your initial rating and what type of vet you are, an additional five to ten points could be added to our overall score; 3) management sees a more detailed application with the knowledge, skills and abilities addressed in addition to your resume.

In any case, nothing beats having a well-planned application or resume and paying close attention to the vacancy announcements on the areas of consideration and how to apply.



Drug-Free Federal Workplace

Christine Fleming

In 1986, Executive Order (EO) 12564 established the goal of a Drug-Free Federal Workplace. In this Executive Order, federal agencies were required to develop their own plan to achieve the objective of a drug-free workplace. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is preparing to implement the Army's Drug-Free Workplace Program plan. A major part of this plan consists of identifying certain positions as testing designated positions (TDPs). These are positions that involve critical safety or security responsibilities. Employees in TDPs are subject to random drug testing. The group of

employees in TDPs are considered a “testing pool”. Random pulls from this testing pool will be conducted at least quarterly. Any employee who occupies a position that has been determined to be a TDP will receive a specific notice 30 days before random testing will begin. For the Pittsburgh District, random testing will begin upon the completion of all labor relations obligations.

The Executive Order also required that agencies make the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) a key part of the Drug-Free Workplace Program. EAP provides services such as education, counseling, referral to rehabilitation, and more. To contact EAP or to learn more about the Army’s Civilian Drug Testing Program contact the CPAC.



WITHIN-GRADE INCREASES

Debra Jefferson

Within-grade increases are pay increases received by employees after they have served a specified amount of time at a certain grade level and demonstrated at least an acceptable level of performance. Generally, employees who are not at the highest step of their grade are entitled to receive the within-grade raise authorized for the next step as long as they; complete the required waiting period, and have at least a “fully successful” (or equivalent) rating for their most recent performance rating period.

Waiting periods for within-grade increases for all general schedule (GS) and wage grade (WG) grades are as follows:

GS

- 52 calendar weeks to be advanced to steps 2, 3 and 4;
- 104 calendar weeks to be advanced to steps 5, 6 and 7;
- 156 calendar weeks to be advanced to steps 8, 9 and 10.

WG

- 6 months to Step 2
- 18 months to Step 3
- 24 months to Steps 4 & 5



TALX

Debra J. Misajon

TALX is an automated system that enables employees to furnish a “key” to companies that need to verify employment. You will be able to have three active “keys” at one time; if they are unused they will expire in six months. This “key” enables institutions to access the system either via the web or phone.

The system is secure via a PIN number and other personal data which is needed to request a “key”. Employees will obtain the “keys” by phone: 1-800-996-7566 or web site: <http://www.theworknumber.com>, enter a code that designates you as a Department of Defense employee, your social security number, and a four digit code, initially your month and day of birth. After access into the system the first time you may change your four-digit code to another PIN number. The system will give you a six-digit code that you give the organization requesting employment verification.

There are be three levels of access, basic, basic plus and full. Basic verifies that you are an Army employee, spells your name, your most recent start date, and how long you have been employed. It will also spell your job title if needed. Basic plus gives the above information, but also provides current salary information. Full access provides everything listed above; in addition, it will give your salary history for the prior two years if available.

Employees must use the TALX system for any employment verification requests. The CPOC no longer completes employment salary verification requests from loan or mortgage companies, etc.